

מוסר

Ethical Lectures for
Rosh Hashanah and
Yom HaKippurim

Transcribed, Translated, and Emended

By

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(Based on a Shiur with Rabbi Kalman Worch)

Ethical Lecture Before Blowing the Shofar
First Day of Rosh HaShanah
From Our Teacher Rabbi *Shalom Sharabi (HaRaShaSh)*

This is an ethical lecture designed to arouse our hearts before the blowing of the Shofar, as is the custom of the Hassidim and Kabbalists in Yerushalayim, by the RaShaSh. [*Sefer Avodat HaKodesh* by the *Gaon Hiddah*]

[This is said by the Head of the Yeshiva with a great arousal, Afterwards the Rabbi's Kaddish is recited]

It is known to my Master and Teacher, the simple reason for the commandment of Shofar is to awaken the hearts that are sleeping in the slumber of the sickness of the Evil Inclination. As the Rambam writes, and this is his language: Even though the blowing of the Shofar is a decree of the Torah [**and we don't have to give a reason for it**], there is a hint to it, meaning to say "Awaken oh sleeping ones from your slumber, and search out your deeds and return with repentance. Remember your Creator to those who forget the truth with the vanities of time." They are busy their whole year with waste and emptiness which don't help and which don't save. Look at your souls, and better your ways and your deeds. Every person should abandon their evil ways and their thoughts which are not good. He should regret for the loss of the time of Torah learning and the diminution of commandments and good deeds, and that which he has not done right. And not just for the actions of the past year, rather for all of the actions of all the days of one's life, and even for previous incarnations, for upon all of these Gd will bring one to justice. And now, is it possible to blow a Shofar in the city and the people not tremble?!

Thus, let us examine our ways and research them because, behold! with our sins we have sent away our mother all these many years. The righteous is lost, the Matron/Divine Presence is lost, therefore all of our goals and our prayers should be with a complete intention to redeem the Divine Presence and all the sparks of holiness from the exile, and to break the house of bondage, and to say to the slave masters, "Go away!", as is written in the *Tikkuney HaZohar* on the verse, "*He [Mosheh] turned this way and that...*" (*Shemot 2:12*). If there is anyone who will awaken to repent to break the bondage and to say to those who are bound, "You may go out"? Is there one who will call out in repentance so that Hashem will return the Divine Presence to him? All of them shout in prayer on Rosh Hashanah and Yom HaKippurim like dogs, "Give us food, forgiveness, wipe out our sins! Give us life! Write us in the Book of Life!" They are brazen souls, but there is no one who calls out in repentance, that Hashem should return the Divine Presence to him.

For anyone who hears the word of Hashem, his heart will fear inside him from fear of Hashem from the glory of His greatness. He should put to his mind that "Today they will bring my case to court before the King, the King of Kings, the Holy One blessed be He, Who judges all the world in one's body, in one's finances, and in one's children. [**He judges**] each person and all he has done, the results of his thoughts and ideas, for He knows all which is hidden in one's heart."

He does not need either witnesses or proof. *“For He is the Judge, He is the Witness, He is the Plaintiff....”* (Avot 5:29) Fear and trembling will come to him, saying, “What can I do if Gd arises? And if He accounts, how will I respond to Him?” Therefore, his eyes will see and his heart will understand. He will examine his deeds, and in a small moment his eyes will gaze to see his sins on his side in thousands and myriads upon his right. In particular, every person who has broken so many negative commandments, especially those that are in the heart, for example, *“Do not hate your brother in your heart,” “Do not avenge or bear a grudge,” “Do not withhold and do not close.”* Concerning the positive commandments, such as to fear Hashem, to love Hashem, to follow His ways, and the positive commandment *“You shall love your friend as yourself”* which is a great rule in the Torah. The latter is the one sin that destroyed the Temple, and we still have not been purified from the spiritual leprosy of the sin of baseless hatred. Therefore, everyone should forgive with full heart to every Jew that no Jew should be punished on his account, to fulfill the commandment to love your friend as you love yourself. One should especially rid oneself of the sin of evil speech, which is even more stringent than the sins of idolatry, sexual immorality, or murder. Similarly, all the light and heavy sins, our hands will be found filled. of them. And upon this, all of those who are pained shall feel pain. Is that what man was created for, to transgress the will of his Creator? Perhaps the life and peace is given from Heaven to waste time upon nothing and emptiness? But, behold! Is it not that man is judged for every moment, and they will demand of him “How did you spend every moment?” as it is written, *“You will not leave me alone long enough to swallow my own spittle?”* (Iyov 7:19).

In particular, the time wasted from Torah learning which rises above them all, why was the land lost, both the upper and lower land? It was due to the abandonment of the Torah, which is the first thing on which a person is judged. For every hour and minute that a person does not engage in Torah it is called a lacking which can never be accounted for. Anyone who does not busy himself with Torah learning is considered to be repulsive to Hashem, because the word of Hashem he has shamed. “Every single day, a *Bat Kol* /heavenly voice rings out from Mount Horeb and says, “Woe them, to the people, because of [their] insult to the Torah!” (Avot 6:2) And even if one sits and does nothing, one is referred to as a scoffer or a clown, from the 4 groups, etc. [**Gemara Pesachim 117a: Shekhinah does not rest [on a person] amidst laziness, sadness, frivolity, lightheadedness or idle words, only amidst the joy of doing a commandment**] And especially more so one who speaks wasted words is breaking the positive commandment *“You shall speak of them [Torah learning]”* (Devarim 6:7). It says one shall speak to man about his speech even things to which are useless that are written and read. Woe upon this shame, and woe upon this embarrassment!

Especially one who stumbles in the sin of these 4 groups and who causes blemish in the 4 worlds of Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah: scoffers/clowns, flatterers, liars, and those who speak evil about others. In particular is the blemish they put on the Divine Presence, every sin is a painful thorn that strengthens Her bondage, and adds pain to Her pains; *“the shame of your mother do not reveal.”* And what language is she speaking? *“Pain upon my head... Is this the reward I hoped for? Woe, my children have taken me out, the maiden has cried, Hashem has put me in the hands of those I cannot stand up against!”*

The busying of oneself in Torah which will rectify the Holy One Blessed be He and His Divine Presence has to be for the sake of Hashem without any other purpose, as it is written in the Tikkuney HaZohar and many other Midrashim. “They cry all night in the Oral Torah with all these questions. They shout like dogs: ‘Give us wealth in this world. Give us wealth in the next world’ as You have said, ‘Learn much Torah and you will gain much reward.’” But there is no other reason to learn Torah save for to raise up the Divine Presence to connect Her to Her Husband. Because of this, a voice goes out every night and says, “What shall I call?” Go and tell them that they should learn Torah to connect the Divine Presence with Her Husband. There is no one who will raise Her up to Her Husband. There is no leader for Her. There is no supporter for Her. For in our sins we have sent away our mother all these years.”

Therefore, now this is a time of favor let us strengthen and restrengthen to subjugate our hearts and to return with full repentance. The gates of repentance today are open, that is what we want like this day. The whole purpose of Shofar depends on repentance as written in the Zohar as we know. The Shofar’s voice does not accomplish unless the sound goes up with the waking of the heart in repentance. And it seems, even if someone has one of these sins that holds back repentance, for example, he was the cause to make someone else sin, the awakening of repentance today can cause the opening of the gates of repentance, for today the gates of repentance are open. The awakening of repentance today is little compared to the great difficulty of any other time. Then Hashem will return—in the partzuf of Imma—to fill the mentalities of Zeir Anpin. This is a great cause for the awakening in the heart in repentance on this day. For the sound of the Shofar does not work in Imma who is called both “Ear” and “repentance” to bring the mentalities into Zeir Anpin unless it is started by the voice going up with the wakening of one’s heart in repentance. And then, things which leave the heart go into the Ear. That is, to know that Gd made man in His form; that means in the form and shape of all the worlds. The Ear which corresponds to Imma in general, and the heart corresponds to Zeir Anpin in general, because that is where sleep is dependant upon. According to the positive commandments that one nullifies, in the same way a person weakens the organs of his Nefesh, Ruah, Neshama, Hayah, and Yehidah, they do not work for him, and they are called dead, and sometimes they completely abandon him. That is the sleep referred to. And upon that when a person breaks a negative commandment, he dries up and ruins the organs of Nefesh, Ruah, Neshama, Hayah and Yehidah and puts control over them to the Other Side, Gd forbid! Now, when a person awakens on repentance he awakens his organs of Nefesh, Ruah, Neshama, Hayah and Yehidah, for the desire and the will for repentance they awaken the organs of Nefesh, Ruah, Neshama, Hayah and Yehidah, which is the Neshama/soul. This causes the drawing down of life to these organs of Nefesh, Ruah, Neshama, Hayah, and Yehidah, and gives them life. In the same way, when the voice of the Shofar goes up along with the awakening of the heart in repentance, it causes Zeir Anpin who is the Heart in general to arouse and to elevate Feminine Waters from the sparks from the back of Imma, and this causes Imma to unite with Abba and to draw the mentalities to Zeir Anpin who is already prepared to accept them.

Therefore, it is a time for beseeching and a time of acceptance to completely regret one's deeds, for all for which we have sinned, in general and in particular, to accept to repent from all iniquities we have done.

It seems that even if one has these sins which hold back repentance, for example, he causes someone else to sin, even the awakening to repent causes him to open the gates of repentance, for today the gates of repentance are open. For the awakening of repentance today is little compared to the great difficulty of any other time. So write the earlier Sages: if one does not repent before Rosh Hashanah, and if he is to be written and sealed on Rosh Hashanah as one of the wicked, if then one *does* think of repentance on this day in public, the evil of his decree will be torn up, and he will be written in the Book of Life. The gates of repentance today are open. Thus it says, "*Seek Hashem when He can be found, call upon Him when He is near*" (Yeshayah 55:6) Also he merits to be a righteous one, and he leans the judgment for himself and all the worlds to the side of merit. Amen, So may it be.

Ethical Lecture Before Blowing the Shofar
Second Day of Rosh HaShanah
From the Pious Teacher AG'N (Avraham Galanti?)

Behold it is known, the main way of returning the mentalities to Zeir Anpin today and the sweetening of all judgments is through the Shofar, and all of that of the Shofar is to awaken our hearts in repentance, saying to us "Awaken sleeping ones from your slumber, and return to Hashem." Then **[the word *Teshuvah* /repentance or return can be parsed into two words] *Tashuv Heh***/ return the letter *Heh* [which is] Supernal Imma to spread the mentalities into Zeir Anpin. The main thing is repentance. For without repentance, the mentalities cannot extend into Zeir Anpin, for all the organs and sinews are blemished.

Therefore, a person's hair will fall out, and every heart will melt and hands will be weakened. With the understanding of every heart, the pain of the dear daughter—the pure soul, the single one, the perfect one, the clean one—for "*the honor of the Princess is inside*" (*Tehilim* 45). She is now a smitten pauper, exiled and sent away, from her nest she is sent away. "Pushed away" they have called to her. She has no leader and no support. Darker than black is her countenance, her shine has faded, her glory has gone away. In place of her being bound in the bundle of life as in her youth in her father's house, instead the maiden is crying and she has no one to save her.

Therefore, a person who has these things to himself [someone who sees this], why is to him slumber and sleep in the slumber of his sins, and is not afraid of the day of rebuke or of the great and awesome day of judgment. Her father will account for her that which she has destroyed to bring upon her all these occurrences. What will answer to him? Who will defend? Woe upon this shame, woe upon this embarrassment! Because he has taken by force this beautiful soul of the daughter of the King of the World. Therefore quickly will move to repent before Hashem, and to hide under his wing and save his soul from all these incarnations and great troubles which will come upon the soul. He should fix his soul to understand and to grasp which sin is the one

which he sinned against his soul. He should search and find the fixing of each of these sins. For straight are the ways of Hashem, the righteous ones go upon them. There are not upon the soldiers in Heaven and the angels of above who will not become a support for him, to hold him up, to help him in the doing of repenting. As our Sages of Blessed Memory have said “He who comes to purify is helped”, for when man sins also towards them reaches the blemish, for they are stopped from their work which they do to receive the prayers of Yisrael and to raise them upon toward the Master to be crowns upon His head. But when a person sins and transgresses, and his prayer is pushed away, and thereby by sin, he will touch darkness and not light. His blemish reaches these holy powers who are called runners, who are supposed to run and protect and defend the Jewish people. Now they are running against these runners of the Other Side, who are hurrying to do evil decrees. In their way there is no one who is pure whether below or above who does not receive shame and the blemish of his sin. Based on the amount of blemish a person blemishes his soul, so too does he cause a blemish to the Divine Presence until it reaches the lowest level. The foolish son is the downfall to his mother. How can a person’s soul not tear into 12 tears when he puts upon his heart how far the blemish of his sins does reach to the point of destroying, Gd forbid, the ones up above? Awaken from this sleep! Let it be upon your heads the troubles of the daughter, the precious one, upon all the sins and rebellions. Listen to what the Divine Presence says: “My head hurts! My arm hurts! I raised up and lifted up the children and they have sinned against me. They begin to cry in their pain, in the pain like suffering. In bitterness she will cry, and with a wonder of heart [**a troubled understanding**] will wail with these cries. My children have sent me out, they are gone, they are drowning in their sins. Someone who gets all this, how can he put on beautiful clothes when he knows that the dirty clothing which is upon him have dirtied his Nefesh, his Ruah and his Neshamah which have distanced him from Gd in Heaven, the Master of all the World, and have dirtied his precious soul. How will he rejoice and feel happy? How can he fill his mouth with laughter? Therefore, our hearts should tremble and move from its place, for great is the sea is our breaking, and how great is our destructiveness, instead of three the earth has angered, in place of the servant who has become king, the maidservant who inherits her mistress. Woe to us, Woe to us, Woe upon us! Where shall we take our shame? Our hands have not returned from swallowing, we have destroyed the channels of supplement, and we have turned them into broken things. We have cut off the growings shoots. In our wings/hems of our garments we find the blood of paupers. Woe to the evil wicked one, for the reward of his own hands will be done to him.

Now Hashem our Gd, we have returned to you, Gd of Mercy and Forgiveness, with a bending over of our height and a lowering of our spirit, with a trembling heart, shaking and trembling, bent over, afraid and oppressed to beg and to pray facing Your Throne of Mercy. To ask for pardon, forgiveness, and wiping away. In Your great goodness, return the rock of our salvation, and see with Your kind eye the pains of our bodies and souls, and accept with mercy and favor our prayer today. Let us merit to be masters of repentance so that we may be written in the Book of the righteous for good life and peace. For we have no one to lean upon save the mercy of our Father in Heaven. Through these ideas of repentance, this will return the mentalities and spread them into Zeir Anpin and sweeten the judgments.

May all of our goals and desires be to pour out our souls to Hashem may He be blessed to redeem the Divine Presence from the exile, and to break the bondage, and to call to the Holy One blessed be He, in repentance to return the Divine Presence to Him for there have been many days and years that the Divine Presence has been in exile. Our House of glory has been destroyed, and closed off is all vision of prophesy and the holy spirit has separated from us, and most commandments of the Torah are hidden in a corner. It is already passed the time of harvesting. Summer is over, and all depends on repentance.

Therefore, let us search out our ways and examine them and return to Hashem, everyone according to his amount, whether one does a lot or whether one does a little. No one should do any less than at least to change from one small sin or especially a great sin. Then he will merit to lean himself and the entire world to the side of merit. One should seclude himself and make an accounting of all his deeds. He will look and he will find so many, like taking advantage and cheating people, stealing, flattery, dirty words, and not doing positive and negative commandments, jealousy, hatred, fighting, haughtiness, chasing after honor, desire for money, forgetting of Hashem, and wasting the time to study Torah. When he sees his many sins and great sins, let his eye pour forth rivers of water. Let him awaken in repentance with a complete regret to repent with a pure heart and to accept upon himself the abandoning of all sins. He will cleave to his Creator, and he should merit to see the pleasantness of Hashem and to visit within His palaces. So may it be. Amen.

The Rebuke of Rabbi Avraham Even Ezra

It is the custom in our Holy Yeshiva from the time of our Teacher the Kabbalist Mordekhai Sharabi to say this Rebuke with a melody after the Arabit Prayer on the Night of Kippur.

Son of the earth! Remember the day of your birth, for at the time of your end you will return to the earth.

Stand and succeed! Talk about the child of five, he gets up with the rising of the sun. Between the breasts of his mother is where he rests and he does not move. On the neck of his father, he grabs and rides.

For at the time of your end you will return to the earth.

How can you lecture a 10-year old? In just a little bit more he will grow and take guidance. Tell him, "Grace! Grace! And good news!" His playmates are the one who gave birth to him and his family.

For at the time of your end you will return to the earth.

How pleasant is it to be a youth of 20! Light as an antelope he leaps upon the mountains. He mocks any rebuke and he shames the voice of his teachers. He rises to grace, his portion and what he takes.

For at the time of your end you will return to the earth.

The thirty-year old man is ruled by his wife. He stands up and sees, behold he is in a trap! He is oppressed and surrounded by archers. He requests of his children and of his wife.

For at the time of your end you will return to the earth.

The forty-year old moves and lowers himself, he rejoices in his portion whether good or bad. He runs on his way and he abandons his friends. Upon his toil he stands on his guard.

For at the time of your end you will return to the earth.

A fifty-year old recognizes that his days are of vanity. He will mourn, for coming soon are the days of mourning. Despised in his eyes is all the honor of the world, for he will fear lest his time is close.

For at the time of your end you will return to the earth.

Ask what was with the sixty-year old? There are neither branches or roots to his deeds. His strength is weak and gone, for they don't rise with him to fight.

For at the time of your end you will return to the earth.

If one's years come to be seventy, his words are not seen or heard. He will be only a burden to his friends, a saving for his soul and for his cane.

For at the time of your end you will return to the earth.

An eighty-year old is a burden to his children, his heart is not with him, nor his eyes. He is disregarded by those who know him, and mocked by his neighbors. Poison is in his cup, and also bitterness is his bread.

For at the time of your end you will return to the earth.

After this, like the dead he is considered. Fortunate is he who is like a visitor to this world. For there is not in his heart ideas or thoughts, only the end of his soul and his reward.

For at the time of your end you will return to the earth.

It is instructive to compare the above with the famous Mishnah of Pirkei Avot with its take on the times of man's life cycle. The commentary is from Kehati:

PIRKEI AVOT: CHAPTER 5: MISHNAH 21

He used to say: At the age of five, (one is ripe) for Bible; at ten, for Mishnah, at thirteen, for *mitzvot*; at fifteen, for Talmud; at eighteen for the marriage canopy; at twenty, for pursuit; at thirty, for vigor; at forty, for understanding; at fifty, for counsel; at sixty, to be an elder; at seventy, for gray hair; at eighty, for strength; at ninety, to bend over; at one hundred, as if he had died and passed away and disappeared from the world.

Kehati

In this Mishnah man's years are divided into periods, so as to urge fathers to teach their children at the appropriate times. Incidentally, we are also told of the natural developments which occur with the passage of time. (*Hameiri*).

He used to say - according to *Tosefot Yom Tov*, citing *Midrash Sh'muel*, the source of these statements is not Rabbi Yehudah ben Tema, but Shmuel HaKatan. Accordingly, the entire Mishnah does not belong to this tractate, but constitutes a later Rabbinic addition. Some versions place at this point the Mishnah cited above (Chapt. 4, Mishnah 19): Shmuel HaKatan said: *Rejoice not when your enemy falls. etc.*

At the age of five, (one is ripe) for Bible - according to some commentaries this means that at this age the child is ready to enter school and learn the alphabet and how to read (the Heb. *mikra* denotes both Bible and reading - tr.), but others hold that this should be done at the age of three, drawing on a Midrashic interpretation (*Tanhuma Kedoshim, Vayikra Rabba*) of the verse (Lev. 19:23): "And when you shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees ... then you shall count the fruit thereof as forbidden; three years shall it be as forbidden unto you; it shall not be eaten." This is interpreted as a symbolic reference to the fruits of Torah, as it is written (Prov. 27:18): "Whoso keeps the fig-tree shall eat its *fruit*." Here the *tree* represents the child, and the *coming into the land* his emergence into the world. The Torah then says that for three full years it shall be counted as *orlah* (lit. "closed" - tr.), and in the fourth year it shall be *holy, for giving praise*, i.e., when the child completes his first three years of *orlah* and enters into his fourth year, sanctify him to the Lord by teaching him the alphabet; *And in the fifth year ... it may yield unto you more richly the increase thereof*- meaning that at this point it is necessary to "increase" his training and introduce the pupil into the domain of the Bible (*Hameiri*).

At ten, for Mishnah - having studied Bible for five years, the child should now begin to learn *Mishnah*. And why did the *Tanna* determine a period of-five years? As our Rabbis noted (*Hul.* 24a): "A pupil who does not succeed in his studies within five years, will never succeed."

At thirteen, for mitzvot - he is considered an adult, and bound to keep the Divine commandments. Intimation of this is found in the Prophets (Is. 43:21): "This people which (*am zu*) I formed for myself, that they might tell of my praise" - the numerical value of *zu* is thirteen. Others claim that this is a *Halakhah* given to Moses at Sinai (*Teshuvot Harosh*).

At fifteen, for Talmud - the study of Gemara. This Mishnah is referring to the analysis and explanations by which the later *Tannaim* (Mishnaic Sages) endeavored to clarify the statements of their predecessors, since in those days the Gemara in its present format did not exist (*Rambam, Sefer Hama'or*).

At eighteen, for the marriage canopy - a hint of this is found by the Midrash in the verse (Lev. 21:13): "And he (*vehu*) shall take a wife in her virginity" - the numerical value of *vehu* equals eighteen. *Rashi* notes that in the account of Creation up to the statement: "because she (Eve) was taken out of man" the word "man" (*adam*) appears eighteen times.

At twenty, for pursuit - if unmarried by then, he should seek a match without delay, lest he be caught up in sinful thoughts (*Hameiri*). Alternatively, this statement refers to the *pursuit* of a livelihood - having studied Bible, Mishnah and Gemara, having married and fathered children, he must now strive to earn a living (*Bartenura*). Some interpret *pursuit* as that of the enemy, since at twenty a man is obliged to enlist into the army (*Mahzor Vitri*) as it is written (Num. 1:3): "From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel."

At thirty, for vigor - thus, the Levites entered the service in the Tabernacle at the age of thirty, as it is written (Num. 4:47): "From thirty years old and upward ... every one that entered in to do the work of service, and the work of bearing burdens in the tent of meeting."

At forty, for understanding - by then he is intellectually mature and able to make logical deductions. Thus, after forty years in the wilderness, Moses said to the children of Israel (Deut. 29:3): "But the Lord has not given you a heart to know, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, until this day." (See Av. Zar. 5b). A hint of this is also found in the phrase "and his heart shall understand" (*ulevavo yavin*)- the numerical value of *levavo* is forty (*Melekheth Shelomo*).

At fifty, for counsel- this involves two elements: 1. intelligence, and 2. experience. By the age of fifty, a person has had ample experience, while his intelligence is still vibrant and as a result, his counsel is distilled by the two vital components (*Hameiri*). Thus it is said of the Levites (Num. 8:25): "And from the age of fifty years they shall return from the service of the work, and shall serve no more; but shall minister with their brethren." What kind of ministrations does the Levite render to his brethren? He advises and trains them how to perform their duty (*Rashi*).

At sixty, to be an elder - as it is written (Job 5:26): "You shall come to your graves in ripe age (*bekhelah*) whose numerical value is sixty. Others interpret: "an elder" to be a wise man who knows how to season his wisdom with reason and good sense, as it is written (Job. 12:12): "*Wisdom is with aged men*" (the Hebrew for aged men' *yeshishim* contains *shishim* 'sixty' - tr.).

At seventy, for gray hair (*la-sevah*) - as it is written of King David (I Chron. 29:28): "And he died (*be-sevah*) in a good old age," and David lived for seventy years.

At eighty, for strength - as it is written (Ps. 90:10): "Seventy, years is our life's span, eighty if our strength suffice."

At ninety, to bend over - by then a person's posture droops. *Rabbenu Yonah* reads instead of *lashuah* bent over', *lasuah* 'to speak', as in 'to pour forth his speech (*siho*)'. Thus, upon reaching ninety, it is proper to devote oneself entirely to prayer and praise of God - extolling His wonders, to perfect one's character, and to the pursuit of Torah and *mitzvot*.

At one hundred, as if he had died and passed away and disappeared from the world - by then his eyes have dimmed, his appearance has deteriorated, his source of intelligence has dried up, and he grows more and more foolish (*Rashi*). And if his mind remains clear, he has all the more reason to limit his activity to prayer, supplication and invocation (*Hameiri*).